



CAN I FILE FOR A PRELIMINARY REVIEW?

If you have any questions regarding Douglas County development standards and requirements, the County encourages applicants to file for preliminary review of a project. This review is called a Pre-Application and is offered free of charge. The Pre-Application process is intended to help you with your final plans.

WHAT IS THE DRC?

The Development Review Committee (DRC) consists of representatives of Douglas County, the Towns of Minden, Gardnerville and Genoa, the fire districts, general improvement districts and other agencies that may have an interest in or may be impacted by the proposed development project. The DRC was established to provide face-to-face response to development proposals and to identify any major flaws in the proposal.

HOW DOES THE COUNTY PROCESS MY APPLICATION?

Once a *Major Variance* application is filed, copies are distributed to the DRC members. The DRC will review the application to determine if all required materials and complete plans have been submitted.

After the application is deemed complete and, where applicable, a recommendation has been received from the town board or general improvement district, the case planner will prepare a staff report and submit the report and recommendation to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is the final decision-making body, and may approve or deny the request. In most instances, there are conditions attached to the Variance approval.

Once a *Minor Variance* application is filed, Community Development staff reviews the application and makes a recommendation to the Director. The Director is the final decision-maker on Minor Variance applications.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Per Nevada State law (NRS), Variance applications are to be reviewed within 65 days of the submittal of a complete application. However, it can take as little as approximately 30 to 45 days for a Major Variance application to be heard by the Planning Commission. Decisions on *Minor Variances* are typically within 3 weeks of the submittal of a complete application. Where projects are located within a town boundary, review time may be slightly longer.

REVIEW BY TOWN BOARDS

Where projects are located within the Town of Gardnerville, Minden or Genoa, the County requires comment by the applicable Town Board prior to making a final decision on the project.

REVIEW BY THE WATER CONVEYANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Douglas County Code requires that all development proposals, which have an irrigation ditch or other conveyance facility located on or adjoining the site, or where the applicant is proposing to drain to an irrigation ditch, appear before the Water Conveyance Advisory Committee prior to receiving Major Variance approval.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S DECISION?

The applicant, owner and agent representing the project will be sent a letter indicating the Planning Commission's final decision within three working days of the decision. Where the application is approved, the letter will include all pertinent conditions of approval for the project. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all conditions are addressed when the plans are submitted for Design Review or Building Permit plan check. (Note: All commercial, industrial, non-residential and multi-family residential projects require Design Review prior to Building Permit submittal.)

FINDINGS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT A MAJOR VARIANCE

In order for the Planning Commission to approve a Major Variance, the following findings must be made based on the facts of each particular case (County Code 20.606.050(B)):

1. That by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of the property in question, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary and exceptional situation or condition of the property in question, the strict application of the provisions of that title would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional and undue hardships upon, the applicant;
2. That the circumstances or conditions do not apply generally to other properties in the same land use district;
3. That the granting of the variance will not result in material damage or prejudice to other properties in the vicinity, substantial impairment of natural resources or be detrimental to the public health, safety and general welfare;

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a written justification statement in their submittal to support these findings.

MINOR VARIANCE

The Director may deny or grant, at his discretion, limited modifications if undue hardship is self-evident. These modifications are limited to deviations not to exceed 20% of required yard or fence height, or 10% of off-street parking or open space requirements. A *Minor Variance* application may be filed in such instances.

In order for the Director to grant the Minor Variance, the findings found in Douglas County Code 20.606.050(A) must be made based on the facts of each particular case.



THE VARIANCE PROCESS TIME-LINE

- DAY 1** Application submittal deadline.
Application submitted by appointment only. For additional information on application submittals, please call the Community Development Department at (775) 782-6217.
- A file is constructed for each application. An agenda is sent out to County departments, towns, fire districts, etc., for Development Review Committee (DRC) meeting.
- DAY 3** DRC meeting. The application is deemed complete and the fee is paid or the applicant is advised of additional application requirements. The applicant may also be provided comments regarding development proposal.
- WEEK 3-5** Town meeting (if applicable).
- WEEK 3-6** Staff report prepared and conditions of approval or findings for denial are developed.
- WEEK 6-8** Report goes to the Planning Commission for a final decision. A letter is sent to the applicant, owner or agent notifying him or her of the final decision within three working days of the decision.

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Douglas County
Community Development Department
1594 Esmeralda Avenue, P.O. Box 218
Minden, NV 89423
Fax: (775) 782-9007
Planning Division: 782-6217
Building Division: 782-6224
Engineering & Utilities Division: 782-6235

Informational Handout

Variance

WHEN DO I NEED TO FILE FOR A VARIANCE?

A *Major Variance* application must be filed when an applicant is requesting a variance from Douglas County Code regulations for such things as building setbacks, building height or parking requirements. A *Minor Variance* application may be filed for deviations not to exceed 20% of the required building setback or fence height, or for up to 10% deviation from the required parking or open space. A variance may not be requested for a use that would otherwise not be allowed within a particular zoning district or for a reduction in required parcel sizes.

WHERE DO I GET AN APPLICATION FOR A VARIANCE?

You may obtain a *Development Application* from the Douglas County Community Development Department, Minden Inn, 1594 Esmeralda Avenue, Minden. The public counter is located on the second floor in Room 202. A planner is available at the public counter from 8 AM to 3:00 PM each weekday or you can call (775) 782-6217 for assistance.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO FILE FOR A VARIANCE?

The submittal requirements for a Major or Minor Variance application are listed within the Douglas County *Development Application* form. Staff recommends that you consult a licensed architect, surveyor, engineer or planner for help in preparing the site plans, studies, and other documents that are required with an application submittal.